In Recital

John-Paul Ksiazek, piano

Candidate for the Master of Music degree
in Piano Performance

Thursday, 10 April, 2008 at 8:00 pm

Arts Building
University of Alberta

Program

DEPARTMENT OF
MUSIC

Program

Sonata in A minor, K. 310 (1778) — Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756 – 1791)

Allegro maestoso
Andante con espressione
Presto

Intermezzo in A Major, Op. 118 No. 2 (1893) — Johannes Brahms (1833 – 1897)

Miroirs (1904 – 1905) — Maurice Ravel (1875 – 1937)

II. *Oiseaux tristes*
IV. *Alborada del gracioso*

Intermission (15 minutes)

Kartinki s vystavki (1874) — Modest Mussorgsky (1839 – 1881)
(Pictures from an Exhibition)

Promenade	Promenade
Gnomus	The Gnome
Intermezzo	Interlude
Il vecchio castello	The Old Castle
Intermezzo	Interlude
Tuileries (Dispute d'enfants après jeux)	(Dispute between Children at Play)
Bydło	Cattle
Intermezzo	Interlude
Balet nevylupivshikhsya ptentsov	Ballet of the Unhatched Chicks
'"Samuel" Goldenberg und "Schmuÿle"'	Samuel Goldenberg and *Schmuÿle*
Intermezzo	Interlude
Limoges le marché (La grande nouvelle)	The Market (The Big News)
Catacombae (Sepulcrum romanum)	Catacombs (Roman Tomb)
Con mortuis in lingua mortua	With the Dead in a Dead Language
Izbushka na kur'ikh nozhkakh (Baba-Yaga)	The Hut on Hen's Legs (Baba-Yaga)
Bogatyrskie vorota (vo stol'nom gorode vo Kieve	The Knight's Gate (in the Ancient Capital, Kiev)

Mozart wrote his Sonata in A minor, the first of only two he composed in a minor key, during his disastrous second trip to Paris. Instead of the warm reception he had received as a child, he was largely ignored and was unsuccessful in gaining employment. While in Paris his mother died, leaving him there alone. The impact these events must have had on Mozart's being can be heard in the sonata, with its sudden shifts of character and wide range of emotions. As with so much of Mozart's music, there is a sense of operatic drama throughout.

The piano pieces in opp. 116 – 119 are among Brahms' final compositions, only being followed by two sonatas for clarinet and piano and a set of chorale preludes for organ. Although it's unusual to program these short pieces individually, they are so thoroughly composed and so beautiful that even though I haven't learned any of the others from op. 118 I thought I'd play this one for you. Jacques Després, my teacher, suggested it would make a nice transition from the sonata to the pieces by Ravel. I began the year with an unusual set of pieces and his ideas for collecting them into a program were a great help.

Ravel's *Oiseaux tristes* (sad birds), with its layering of ideas, constant flow of triplet eighth notes, and use of bird calls, reminds me of the music of Messiaen. The faint-hearted need not be alarmed, however, as the soundscape produced is entirely impressionistic with rich, beautiful harmonies. In *Alborada del gracioso* (The Comedian's Aubade), the French interest in Spanish music that was popular at the time can be seen. Both Debussy and Ravel were praised by Spanish composers for their ability to write such convincingly authentic Spanish music. Having a Basque mother, Ravel came by it honestly. An aubade is a song or poem about lovers parting at daybreak.

Mussorgsky composed *Pictures from an Exhibition* shortly after attending an exhibition of paintings and drawings by his friend Victor Hartmann who had passed away. This work is programmatic, with the opening *Promenade* depicting the composer walking through the exhibition. This theme returns in the following *Intermezzi*, each time in a different character. The individual pieces are based on some of the pictures of the exhibition, though Mussorgsky did not attempt to recreate the pictures in music; he instead used the pictures as a starting point for his own imagination. For example, *Bydło*, a picture of cattle, became an oxcart with a heavy load, and *Goldenberg* combined two Jews from separate pictures, one rich and one poor, who get into an argument.

A great deal of *Pictures'* popularity comes from its colourful portrayal of these diverse scenes and its Russian flavour. Mussorgsky's music is known for its realism and strong Russian nationalism, both of which are very much present in this work. These tendencies were so much stronger than they were in his colleagues that his music was largely misunderstood and became widely known in altered forms that removed the force of expression and toned down his originality. Although *Pictures* was composed in 1874, it wasn't until the latter half of the 20th century that it became a part of the standard piano repertoire. By this time it had become well known in Ravel's 1922 orchestrated version, which lacks the directness and individuality of Mussorgsky's musical language. Recent decades have seen a desire to return to Mussorgsky's original conception of the work, though this has proven difficult with the prejudices created by well-known altered forms and uncertainty with regards to what Mussorgsky's ideas were.

There will be a reception following this recital in the student lounge through doors to the left in the main entrance to the building as you leave the hall. Just follow a hungry looking student to find it. I would like to thank everyone for coming and invite all of you to a recital mezzo-soprano Rebecca Claborn and I will be giving on April 18th at 8 p.m. at Holy Trinity Anglican Church, 10037 84th Avenue. We will be performing works by Caccini, Monteverdi, Robert Schumann, and Wolf.